

A View From the Windshield

Posted At : May 22, 2014 5:53 AM | Posted By : Rick Bernardi
Related Categories: Anti-cyclist bias: Police

By Rick Bernardi

A few days ago, the following news item appeared in the [American-Statesman](#)
[American-Statesman](#):

[Driver critical after collision Saturday with truck in Lakeway](#)

*By Philip Jankowski
American-Statesman Staff*

A driver remains in critical condition after he collided over the weekend with a semi-truck in Lakeway, police said Tuesday.

Lakeway officials have not released the driver's name.

The wreck occurred about 1:30 p.m. Saturday in the 2100 block of RM 620. The driver had been northbound in the right lane when an 18-wheel truck traveling northbound in the left lane passed the driver and then turned right, crossing in front of his path and the driver ran into the truck, police said. EMS airlifted the man to University Medical Center Brackenridge in Austin, where he has remained since the incident, officials said.

According to a statement from Lakeway Police Chief Todd Radford, the truck driver does not appear to be at fault. Police filed no charges and issued no citations in the incident.

"The opportunity for the truck driver to see the driver and respond in time was minimal due to the driver's position in the next lane and the speed at which the driver was traveling," Radford said.

If that seems to be, well, just plain wrong-headed, you're right. In fact, the truck driver broke the law when he violated the driver's right of way, and it's shocking that the Police Chief can't see that plain fact.

Well, maybe it's because he's looking at things through [the windshield perspective](#). You see, the incident was reported exactly as you just read. Well, almost exactly. I actually made a few small changes to the story. The "driver" whose right of way was violated was actually a bicyclist. And the cyclist was actually riding on the shoulder of the road, rather than in the right lane. And the news neglected to mention that the trucker passed the cyclist before violating his right of way, so I made that point clear in the story.

But everything else is exactly as reported, word for word (the actual article is [he](#)

[here](#)). So if it seems clear that the trucker violated my fictional “driver’s” right of way, it should be equally clear that the trucker violated the cyclist’s right of way. And yet, Lakeway Police Chief Radford couldn’t see that. Why? Windshield Perspective Blindness. He saw a cyclist, and that simple fact blinded Chief Radford to what really happened—a trucker violated somebody else’s right of way, critically injuring that person. And the Lakeway Police Department just can’t see this fact that is in plain and open view.